

NAILSWORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICERS' ANNUAL REPORT.

Dr Martin, medical officer of health, read his annual report on the health and sanitary condition of the district, as follows:—

Gentlemen,—I beg to lay before you my third annual report on the Sanitary Administration of this district.

House Accommodation:—Inspection of the house accommodation in the district has been made as time and opportunity allowed, but—though improvements are required in various parts—it has not been found necessary to call your attention to any special houses during the year. Two cases of overcrowding were dealt with during 1903: in one of them proceedings had to be taken before the Magistrates, who fined the defendants 8s. 6d., and gave an order to prevent recurrence of the overcrowding. The number of new houses built during the year was four.

Sewerage and Drainage:—Progress has been made in this matter. On the 3rd March the Council instructed G. P. Milnes, Esq., Assoc.M.Inst.C.E., Surveyor to the Stroud Urban District Council, to prepare all plans and particulars for a complete scheme, necessary for application to the Local Government Board for permission to obtain a loan to carry out the work: these plans, etc., were completed, and an estimate was given to the Council on 6th October that the whole scheme would cost £13,000. It was resolved to make application to the Local Government Board for the whole scheme. A Committee was appointed to go into the matter of a site for the Sewage Disposal Works, and negotiations are now being carried on. Various minor improvements have been made in house drainage, but the difficulties cannot be fully met until the general system of sewers has been provided. In several parts of the district the "privy vault" is the form of closet in general use: the danger from such in contaminating the soil and underground water is a matter I have often referred to. The bye-laws adopted in the surrounding Rural District prohibit the construction of such "vaults" in connection with new houses, but a cemented receptacle above ground which cannot pollute subsoil water is allowed. It is to be hoped that similar bye-laws will soon be in force in this district and that—in those cases in which houses cannot be connected with the new sewers—the present "vaults" will be replaced by privies such as those allowed by the above bye-laws.

Refuse Disposal:—The present conditions

of the contract for the removal of house refuse are that the refuse shall be removed in the streets before 10 a.m., and before noon within a radius of half a mile of the Church, the contractor to find a dumping ground for the refuse. It has not been an easy matter to discover a suitable place, and the question is now receiving the consideration of the Council.

Water Supply:—The heavy rains of the past year have rendered the local supplies more abundant in their yield than has been the case for many years. Attention has been called during the year to the necessity of more careful protection of these supplies from contamination. The number of connections with the mains of the Stroud Water Company increased from 239 to 261 in 1902 and to 275 in 1903.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops:—The number of dairies on the register is 7. There has been no change in the management of the dairies, and the attention of the milk-sellers has had to be drawn to the unsatisfactory condition of some of the vessels and places in which the vessels are kept. Milk is, of all foods for human consumption, the one most susceptible to its surroundings, and too great care cannot be exercised in its collection and storage for sale.

Slaughter houses still require improvements before they can be considered really satisfactory.

Factories and Workshops:—The number of workshops on the register is 12, which are inspected from time to time. Bakehouses have received special attention: one though not "underground" in the ordinary sense of the word comes within the definition of an "underground bakehouse," given in the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901. Improved means of lighting and ventilation were provided for this bakehouse, and a certificate of its suitability has been given by the Council. Very great improvement has been made in the bakehouse to which I drew your special attention in my last annual report, and it is now most satisfactory.

Bye-laws:—The bye-laws which have been under the consideration of the Stroud Rural District Council with respect to nuisances, and new buildings, and the regulations with respect to dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops have been finally adopted and the former received the sanction of the Local Government Board on the 9th November. As I have mentioned in my previous reports, I under-



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stand that it was intended to adopt similar bye-laws in this district, which is contiguous with the Rural District. In May, the whole Council was appointed the "Bye-law" Committee, four to form a quorum, and the matter is now being considered. In addition to the above bye-laws, it is advisable that some should be made for the regulation of slaughter-houses, which are very important as being places where food is prepared for human consumption. In dealing with this matter, it should be remembered that this is an Urban, and not a Rural, District—more especially in connection with nuisances caused by the keeping of swine.

Infectious Disease:—The total number of cases notified during 1903 was 16—2 cases of scarlet fever, and 14 of diphtheria. Both cases of scarlet fever were in one house, and the disease was introduced by a child who had had scarlet fever just before he came to stay at this house. All precautions possible were taken, and there was no spread of the disease from these cases. Nine of the 14 cases of diphtheria occurred in the first two months of the year, and some of them were undoubtedly connected with an outbreak of this disease among the children at the school in the neighbouring parish of Horsley. In other cases sanitary defects were found in the houses, and in two cases the disease had been present in the same houses in 1901. There was one death from this disease during the year. From the time of the adoption of the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act 1889, by the Rural District Council (then the Local Authority for the district) in 1890 up to 1898, only two cases of diphtheria had been notified in this district: since 1898 cases have occurred every year:—1899, 2 cases; 1900, 71 cases; 1901, 3 cases; 1902, 14 cases. In October last, the Council recognising the importance of early diagnosis in preventing the spread of this disease, and also the value of bacteriological examinations in attaining this, authorized me to make arrangements with W. Washbourn, Esq., M.R.C.S., of Gloucester, to undertake such examinations for diphtheria and typhoid fever for six months, for any medical practitioner in the district: since the date of this arrangement no advantage has had to be taken of this concession. The County Council have now made an agreement with Professor Stanley Kent, of University College, Bristol, whereby examinations for diphtheria and typhoid fever can be made for any practitioner in the administrative County, including Nailsworth, free of charge.

Vital Statistics:—The population of the district estimated to the middle of 1903 was 3,035. It is on this figure that the various rates have been calculated.

Births:—The number of births during the year was 82—45 males and 37 females—a rate per 1,000 of the population of 27.0. This is higher than in any year since the

formation of the district, the average being 21.2. The rate for the whole of England and Wales was 28.4, and for the neighbouring Stroud Urban and Rural Districts, 20.1 and 21.4 respectively. Of the total 82 births, 5—6.1 per cent.—were illegitimate (9.2 per cent. in 1902). In the Stroud Rural District they formed 2.9 per cent. of total births, and in the Stroud Urban, 4.4 per cent.

Deaths:—The number of deaths registered in the district was 39—a rate of 12.9 per 1,000 of the population: adding to this the number of deaths of persons belonging to this district in the Union Workhouse, Stroud General Hospital and County Asylum (1 in each) the total number becomes 42—13 males and 29 females. The nett death rate is 13.8, which is the lowest recorded since the formation of the district, and 1.7 below the average of the previous seven years, viz., 15.5. Correcting for sex and age distribution, as explained in my report last year, the death rate becomes 12.3. The rates for the whole of England and Wales was 15.4, and for the neighbouring districts—Stroud Rural and Stroud Urban (similarly corrected)—11.6 and 14.4 respectively.

Deaths under one year of age:—There were 8 deaths of infants under the age of one year, equal to an infantile mortality of 98, the average since the formation of the district in 1895 being 78. The corresponding rate in the whole of England and Wales was 132, and in the Stroud Rural and Urban Districts 73 and 88 respectively.

Special Diseases:—During the year I have made investigations with respect to the distribution of cancer, tuberculosis, and pneumonia in this neighbourhood. The rates for this district are given below together with those for the whole Union:—

Average Death Rates, 1881-1901.

	Cancer Malignant diseases	other Tubercular diseases	Phthisis diseases	other Lobar Pneumonia	Broncho
Nailsworth90	.17	.83	.17	.30
Stroud Union	.80	.12	1.11	.29	.60
					.34

Except for cancer and other malignant diseases, Nailsworth compares favourably with the average for the whole Union: an explanation of the higher rates for malignant diseases is probably to be found in the fact that in Nailsworth there is an excess of females at all ages over 25 as compared with the whole Union. My general conclusions will be found in my annual report on the Stroud Rural District for 1903.

Deaths not certified by a medical certificate:—These were five in number, 9.5 per cent. of total deaths. Inquests were held in four cases with the following verdicts:—1, Accidentally burnt; 2, Found dead in bed, having been accidentally overlain; 3, Found dead, having hanged himself while temporarily insane; 4, Suddenly—thrombus in pulmonary artery and left ventricle. Natural causes. In one case no inquest was held, the described cause of death was "cancer of the face."

